

Japan Christian Activity News

PUBLISHED

BY NCCJ

Editor:

Shoji Tsutomu

ISSN: 0021-4353

592
#591 December 20, 1982

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM NCCJ MODERATOR

When I read the Christmas story in the Bible I am struck by the fact that wise men from the East were chosen to tell about the birth of Jesus in Matthew's gospel - the gospel written particularly for the Jews. Also in Matthew, non-Jewish women, Rahab and Ruth, were recorded in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

The Christmas story in Luke's gospel describes shepherds in the fields who went to worship the baby lying in a manger. Furthermore, Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord" and went on to confess: "He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty."

An amazing transformation took place in the Christmas message. In the story of the birth of Jesus foreigners, poor shepherds, sinners and women had important supporting roles. In contrast, in the present world the super-powers armed with nuclear weapons are proud of their power. One report indicates that 18 million children under the age of five starved to death last year. 75% of them were children in Asian and African countries. In contrast, overweight is a problem for Japanese children.

The theme of the NCC-J General Assembly, March 1982 was, "Jesus Christ 'with the Least of These'--Unity in Mission," illustrates the meaning of the Christmas event. Such movements as the elimination of nuclear armaments and peace making efforts, the criticisms from Asian people of distortions in Japanese history textbooks, and other challenges, must be considered from the perspective of "the least of these brothers and sisters."

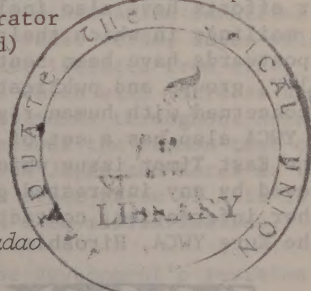


Christ challenges us to transform ourselves through the power revealed in the Magnificat. Christmas is a time to be enlivened again in the Biblical faith.

Dr. Lee In ha, Pastor
Korea Christian Church in Japan
NCC-J Moderator
(Translated)

JAN 3 1983

by WATANABE Sadao



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KURE YWCA PICKS UP EAST TIMOR ISSUE

East Timor, the Eastern most part of an island in the Malay Archipelago which is the largest and easternmost of the lesser Sunda Islands has been the subject of intense study and discussion by the Kure YWCA.

According to Jean Inglis, a member of the Kure YWCA, they began studying the situation in East Timor a little over a year ago. At that time the World YWCA was engaged in a campaign to raise funds and educate Y members on the problem of refugees and also to seek ways to eliminate the main cause of the refugee problem, war. In this context, the Kure YWCA took up the problem of East Timor's War with Indonesia which has already claimed well over 100,000 lives and turned half the population into displaced persons.

The Kure YWCA is presently researching the issue of East Timor and hopes to eventually petition the Japanese government to change its policy of support for the Indonesian take over of East Timor. Specifically, according to Inglis, the Kure YWCA would like to see the Japanese government change its policy of voting against the United Nations resolution on the issue of East Timor, and lend its active support to the UN efforts to have Indonesia withdraw from East Timor territory.

At present the Kure YWCA has produced and is issueing an easy-to-understand pamphlet on East Timor as well as a postcard which can be used to express one's opinion about the East Timor issue to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Their efforts have also included extensive mailings in which their pamphlets and postcards have been sent to every local Y, groups and publications that are concerned with human rights. The Kure YWCA also has a set of slides on the East Timor issue which can be borrowed by any interested group. For further information, contact Jean Inglis at the Kure YWCA, Hiroshima ken.



FROM THE MIDST OF A NUCLEAR WAR!

Mr. Nelson Anjain, former village leader of Rongelab of the Marshall Islands recently visited Japan to tell about the situation on Bikini and neighboring islands of the Micronesian group. The following is a summary of his speech on Oct. 21, 1982.

Because of the initial US hydrogen bomb test on Bikini island in 1954, people on Rongelab were showered by "dead ashes". It was so thick that visibility was cut to zero as ashes covered everything. Knowing nothing about the deadly effects of the ash children merrily ran about. A little later people were suffering from headaches, vomiting and diarrhea. All the children cried excessively. Three days later we were moved to another island. People lost their hair as they felt their bodies starting to decompose.

20 years later, ordered by the US military, we went back to the Island. Soon tumors started to grow and many people died from cancer. When death came their bodies were black. Many premature and still births continue to be seen. Eyeless children are born. Some babies are without arms, while other babies legs are completely bent. The worst are babies that look like fruit.

The radiation poison is still present on the island, for people who later came to the island died from the same diseases.

The crabs were delicious, but unfortunately no longer edible. Chickens and pigs which have eaten the crabs are poisonous as well. The U.S. advisor said that all poisons are concentrated in the bones, not in the meat. However, we know this is a lie.

Every year doctors are sent to examine us. Each year they tell us to "wash your body well with water." They have no real interest in treating our sicknesses, but are rather more interested in research. A year after the test, doctors made a water tank by using sand mixed with the "dead ashes." They said the water was safe for drinking but they never drank the water.

(continued page 3)

On the Marshall Islands there are no doctors or scientists. Several years ago 2 doctors from Hiroshima came with a US doctor. They did not do any treatment but said they would send doctors later. We have not heard from them since.

I am now living in Ebeye island of Kwajalein which is very small. From one side of the island to the other it only takes 10 minutes to walk. There are presently 8,000 people living on this small island. The drinking water is brought in by the US boat every day from Kwajalein Island. But when the US tests its missiles from Calif., which is 2 or 3 times a month, the water route is cut off. The U.S. territorial right of 50 years is now over, but the U.S. is still testing, the missiles "for the sake of defending the Pacific."

During World War II many islanders were killed by the Japanese military, and the Japanese Government is now planning to dump nuclear waste in our area of the ocean. This must be stopped.

JAPAN-KOREA CONSULTATION ON TEXTBOOKS

Responding to the Korean statement on the Textbook Controversy (Sept. 13 JCAN) and the statement by the Central Committee of the NCC in Japan (Sept. 16 JCAN) the Korea-Japan Church consultation on the Japanese textbook issues was held. Eight people from Korea representing NCC leaders, historians and journalists along with the Japanese delegates formed the following joint statement.

25 representatives of Korea and Japan NCCs met Nov. 25-27th in Tokyo for a consultation on the Japanese textbook issue in order to seek roles for the church in the Japan-Korea relationship.

The Ministry of Education has continued to control the context of history textbooks over the last 20 years in collaboration with increases in Japan's armaments. The historical accounts of Japan's invasion of other Asian coun-

tries were changed in order to give glory to the Japanese military and to further justify the invasions by devaluing the lives of people in other Asian countries.

Even though during the past several months the Japanese government was severely criticised for the mistake of the revisions, the Suzuki administration would only say that criticism by neighbouring countries would be taken into consideration by the School Textbook Authorization Research Council. Moreover, the South Korean government accepted this response.

This attitude by the Japanese government is rooted in the past history. Japan has repeatedly violated Korea by military force. In the beginning of this century Japan invaded Korea and colonized the country for 36 years. The ruling policies were attempts to annihilate the culture and the Korean people.

Even in the post-war period the Japanese government has continued this same attitude of legitimizing their colonial rule. The government's intention to eliminate historical facts in history textbooks is indicative of the government's attitude, to rule others through domination by power.

Even though Japan already possesses a powerful military force she is still expanding her military capabilities. If Korea establishes an alliance with the Japanese under the military security treaty of the U.S., the Korean economy, politics and culture will once again be ruled by Japan. This same effect will occur in other Asian countries as well. In other words, Japan will become further isolated from other Asian people which will increase anti-Japanese sentiments throughout Asia. For these reasons the common task of people in both Japan and Korea as well as people in other parts of Asia is to oppose Japan's re-militarization.

To oppose the government's revision of the textbooks the following actions will be taken:

1. To clarify Japan's invasion to other Asians, to recognise the discrimination that is being perpetrated against them and to present criticisms on these issues.

2. To work for the elimination of discriminatory practices that Japan exercises against other Asians and to positively recognize the uniqueness of each culture in Asia and to identify with them.

3. To recognize the value consciousness of the rulers (emperor system in Japan) in which domination of and hence sacrifice of people's lives is operative and to overcome this kind of value consciousness.

4. To criticise mission of a dominating nature in which military and economic invasions of other countries are perpetuated even further.

All these are related to historical views and we must realize the importance of the people's view of history. People are suffering. Because of this, these individuals have a great capacity for sensitivity, for human dignity and a desire to pursue the establishment of a peaceful world without discrimination and oppression.

Jesus Christ who experienced great suffering on the Cross is among the people as the Messiah. God revealed His glory in the suffering Christ and in His silence and non-action the extravagance of human beings was judged. Hope dwells among people and blessings empower their lives. These people are a true influence on history. With this clear awareness in mind we ask forgiveness of our past sins and look to the future.

From 1973 Korea-Japan Church consultations have been held five times in order to deepen our mutual understandings. In this consultation we again recognized the importance of solidarity for the common task. With this in mind we exchanged information and resources for cooperative tasks. We desire that Christian solidarity be extended to churches in other parts of Asia. We considered an international confer-

ence on education on history which will be supportive of peace in Asia.

Japan's remilitarization is rapidly expanding. This is the time when solidarity among people is critically needed in order to confront the expansion of militarism in the world.

Our path is full of difficulties, but the promise of Your Kingdom is given to us.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

November 27, 1982

Korea-Japan Church Consultation on the Japanese History Textbook Issues.
(translation by JCAN)

TEXTBOOK CONTROVERSY UPDATE: TIGHT CONTROL BY MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The approval process for public school textbooks in Japan, particularly history books, has received wide publicity in recent months (Aug. 81, Jul., Aug., Sept., 82 JCAN) in many Asian countries and in the U.S. On Nov. 16th the Textbook Authorization Council recommended to the Ministry of Education (ME) that, when screening textbooks, ME officials should "pay due attention to descriptions of modern history related to Japan and neighboring Asian nations from the viewpoint of international understanding and cooperation..." South Korea and China, the only two countries to formally protest the revisions which glorified Japan's history, indicated acceptance of the ME's promise to follow the recommendations.

Some of the newspaper accounts indicated that though the textbook problem is thus formally ended, the issue of textbook control is by no means ended. According to the Asahi Evening News, the essence of the problem "lies in the attitudes of the Japanese people themselves; it concerns our perceptions of the past... As a domestic problem, the textbook issue has only just begun." A Mainichi Daily News editorial also pointed out that the recommendations failed to "mention the Japanese soldiers' atrocities in Okinawa in which many nonmilitary Okinawan residents were killed

toward the end of the war."

On Nov. 24th Minister of Education Ogawa (who has since been replaced in the new cabinet of Prime Minister NAKASONE Yasuhiro) made the official statement that the new criteria have been accepted and said that the ME would so inform all schools and municipalities. He also said that he hoped that textbooks approved for use beginning in April 1983 would be corrected and that the spirit of the new screening standards would be reflected immediately in the classroom.

However, despite Ogawa's statement, there has apparently been no actual change in the way ME officials handle requests from textbook publishers for permission to "correct" the textbooks. It was reported on Dec. 3rd by Asahi Evening News that the ME has rejected a request by Sanseido, a publisher, for permission to revise three history textbooks. The revisions requested included changing "advance into" to read "invasion of" China and Korea, as well as other changes. The ME rejected all requested revisions.

It was reported that this most recent refusal to allow changes in textbooks brings to nine (from four publishers) the number of textbook revision requests that were dis-allowed.

"Because the publishing deadline was tight in order to get the textbook into high schools next year, the publishing company found it did not have enough time to submit the controversial passage to the textbook screening committee." (Yomiuri)

Shimizu Shoin had to publish this textbook using the text that had initially been approved by the ME.

Japan's neighboring countries will continue to watch how history is re-interpreted in Japanese history textbooks. Persons in Japan concerned at movements toward the right in political and education circles are also watching.

On Dec. 1st, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) 8:30 morning news

reported that publishers of textbooks are proposing changes in books being prepared for use in 1984. The report indicated that the changes being proposed, if accepted, would allow the textbooks to restore the original historical descriptions which had been cosmetized under ME instructions. The ME response is expected in June, 1983.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM A PHILIPPINE JAIL

I last read "Flame of the Worker" in April 1982, just before I was arrested. I remembered what I could of its lines last August and September, when labor leaders and ordinary workers were imprisoned. This December, we are going on a fast to press for their release.

**(collection of poems by Korean workers)*

"Those who would give light must endure burning" (prison quote)

In the beginning is a sudden spark
and then a steady glow
a stream of light coursing
through ash-grey channels
clearing dark, tint brows.

"Of course we workers suffer. But now,
we know why
and why we need not."

The wind reels.
A fever burns within.

"Of course we workers struggle.
We need to.
And now we know better."

The fever runs.
Temple veins throb to mounting heart beats
Light gleams in dark-set eyes.

We come to cast fire upon the dark earth
and we are in anguish until we do it.

In the beginning the light can be too sudden,
Words too intense, outrunning, overwhelming until we learn from those we try to teach.

And the light leaps, fever infects
More temples throb to mounting heart beats
More light gleams in dark-set eyes.

And the light comes as fire into the darkness
And the darkness cannot grasp it

(continued page 6)

Their demands are unreasonable!
(our plans are so rational)
they are unreasonable!
(We are so logical)

Fire them!

Let us gather candles
even though bound with barbed wire.
Let us strike to light them
as we curse the darkness.

Huddle closer to the warmth
Add fuel to our picket bonfires.
Burn oil! (Dearer than our sweat)
Burn wood! (As brown as our bodies)

Burn inside as this cold December
taunts us with its carols.

Console ourselves.
It must be even colder in Korea.
What did the shepherds burn
to keep warm?

Suddenly, another light
White, merciless, blinding
Red, flashing in the dark.
Light without warmth, no fire.
Dark, polished boots
Darker wooden truncheons
Attack to the music of sirens.

We scatter like the burning coals
of our picket bonfire.
They stomp at the flames.

Gather firewood in the dark
Blow gently into the ashes
Regroup, remember.

The light shines as fire in the darkness
And the darkness has never put it out.

This decision to share the little we have extends even beyond the oppressed to the middle classes (to which most church people belong). The oppressed need to build coalitions if their struggles are to be more than defensive and holding reactions. This calls for honest recognition that the middle classes can help (some guilt feelings or sense of duty can be part of their mixed motives), but we also need help.

The resources we have to share are many - money and political skill, yes, but also information and analysis, strategy and tactics, hope and inspiration, yes even laughter and tears and the strength drawn from knowing we're not so alone.

Let me pause at this point. I wait for your side of this conversation.

In struggle and hope

*Ed de la TORRE (Father)
MIG 15 Detention Center
Camp Bago, Bomtay
Quezon City
Philippines*

ONE CHRISTIAN'S OPINION SCIENTISM & SHINTOISM: JAPAN'S NEW GODS

Only in Japan can one see such contrasts. Opening up the pages of one of Japan's leading English language newspapers, there is a picture of a ground breaking ceremony for the 1985 International Exposition on Science and Technology to be held in Tsukuba City, north of Tokyo. Heralding to the entire world that Japan is among the most advanced in the sci-tech field, massive concentrations of human and economic resources dedicate themselves to the creation of the most sophisticated gadgets the world will ever see. Supported by the largest and most powerful of Japan's corporations, they proclaim that the sci-tech gods are the greatest. But the most disturbing aspect of the picture is also very ominous, for alongside the high priests to gods of technology is another priest dressed in all the finest traditional robes that Japan's folk religions can muster, performing a traditional Shinto rite of purification. It is here in this very symbolic way that the two high priests of Japan's most powerful religions (Sci-techism and Shintoism) come together to blend the forces of nationalism and scientism into a new meld of power that will shape Japan's way of relating to the rest of the world for a very long time to come.

If it were not for the fact that international political forces today are pressuring Japan to rearm and for the fact that there are groups in this island nation who believe that there is a glorious future to be had for this country under the aegis of technologically sophisticated military power nurtured by the traditional values

enshrined in the "Way of the Gods" (Shinto), the picture would only be comic relief. But this is a replay of Japan's tragic past. How is it possible that a religion as amorphous as Shinto (no founder, no official sacred scriptures, and no dogma) can come to stand along side the high priests of scientism and share with them this ceremony marking the beginnings of Japan's most ambitious international celebration of sci-tech power? How is it possible that this government sponsored international exhibition can invoke the gods of Shinto priest when the Constitution of Japan clearly states that the separation of religion and state shall be maintained? How is it possible that the "Way of the Gods" (Shinto) somehow escapes being designated a religion by none other than the Supreme Court of Japan?

All of this is possible because there are ominous stirrings that wish very much to weld together the graven images of the Shinto pantheon with the graven images of the military-industrial complex, to bring Japan back to her rightful place in the sun.

Tony Carter

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

I want to report on the activities of a military-type group with trucks and loudspeakers in front of and in the grounds of my church on Sunday, Oct. 31.

At about noon a large jeep-type vehicle and two much larger trucks fitted with loud-speakers from which emerged violently loud music drew up in front of the church and parked across the two main gates. Then about 15 men in dark blue uniforms and heavy boots stood across both gateways. When the music stopped a mustachioed gentleman on the back of one of the trucks treated us to a hysterical litany of hatred of Christ. Christianity and the Catholic Church in particular, while the goon squad at the gates shouted their approval.

After some minutes of this, one young man from the church went over and asked them

to leave as they were making too much noise. At this they charged onto the church property, caught the young man, punched him in the face and knocked him down and kicked him. A small child about 2 years old was caught in the middle of their charge and suffered a swollen left eye and abrasions on the cheek, arm, and thigh. Thanks be to God and a few stalwarts of the parish, the charge was broken up before the child was more seriously injured.

The young man who was attacked suffered a bloodied nose and bruised lip. The police were called and duly arrived and while they were taking statements from the young man, the father of the injured child and others, we were treated to a further 20 minutes of abuse and martial music before the gallant members of the "uyoku dantai" (rightest group) climbed aboard their vehicles and returned to base.

I might add that on the previous Sunday these same people were doing their thing in front of the Catholic Cathedral here in Nagoya.

I have lived and worked in Japan for 22 years and I love the country and I love the people. Japan has the reputation of being one of the most peaceful countries in the world. If the "uyoku dantai" in exercising their own right to freedom of speech are allowed to trample upon the freedom of others one wonders how long peace and freedom will reign in this country.

(Rev.) Francis Crilley

M.S.C.

(Taken from the Japan Times 11/15/82)

We have a long, long way to go. So let us hasten along the road, the road of human tenderness and generosity. Groping, we may find one another's hands in the dark.

Emily Greene Balch,

Nobel Peace Laureate

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PRAYER MEETINGS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA

A moving answer to prayers worldwide during International Human Rights Week has come in recent days from south Korea. Mr. KIM Dae-jung, Christian politician serving a twenty-year sentence after having been falsely accused of sedition in 1980, was moved from his Chungju Prison cell to Seoul National University Hospital for medical treatment December 16. Seven others tried with him, and numerous other prisoners of conscience, are reportedly to be released by Christmas in a dramatic response to the ongoing prayers and concerns of Christians in Korea and overseas.

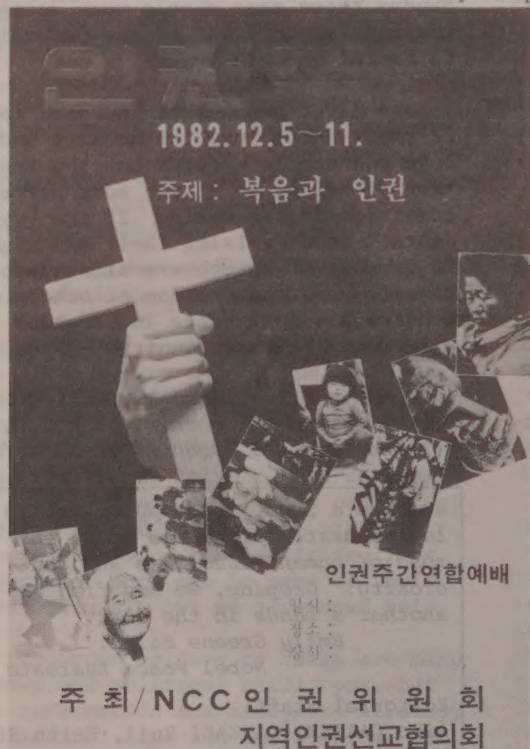
Human Rights Week (December 5-11) was commemorated within Korea with a series of prayer services throughout the country - publicized on posters such as that reproduced below - under the sponsorship of the National Council of Churches of Korea. Prayers for the release of 417 known prisoners of conscience, for the restoration of representative government which would guarantee human rights, for the victims of social and economic injustice, and for fellow Koreans in north Korea were raised.

In Tokyo, too, human rights concerns were the focus of a December 10 "Human Rights Day Prayer Service in Fellowship with Christians in Korea", attended by 70 people and held in the Christian Building at Nishiwaseda. Kyodan Minister OSHIO Seinosuke based his message on the Gospel of Luke (1:46-55) after a series of five personal witnesses of faith and action presented by Catholic and Protestant youth. Prayers for the early release of Mr. KIM and other prisoners of conscience, and for adequate medical treatment of many suffering in prison from the effects of torture and frostbite, were also shared.

Although the news of Mr. KIM's transfer to hospital and possible treatment in the United States was received with thanksgiving, concerns over other prisoners of conscience continue to be heard. On May 31 and October 12 this year, two prisoners from Kwangju Prison died in Chunnam University Hospital following brutal treatment while

under investigation and in prison. Other detainees have described in detail the tortures to which they have been subjected, writing in legal documents submitted in court. Requests have been received from Christians in Korea for continued efforts on behalf of these victims of torture, emphasizing that despite well-publicized amnesties and occasional improvements, a pattern of human rights' violation persists to this day.

One case in progress is cause for particular concern. In the trial of 16 persons in connection with the March 18 Pusan American Cultural Center arson attack, it has been revealed that torture was used to extract "confessions" (although defendant MOON Bu-shik had already admitted to the arson and had turned himself in). Catholic and Protestant church leaders have protested the use of torture, the distorted media accounts, and the death sentences against two defendants (upheld by their Appellate Court on December 13). Our prayers and supportive actions continue to be earnestly requested from Korea.



[Poster prepared by the NCC-Korea for nationwide prayer meetings during Human Rights Week]